

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address February 23, 2018
Partnering with Secretary Azar

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

Last month, Secretary Alex Azar was confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services. In this role, Secretary Azar is at the helm of our nation's efforts to improve health care for the American people. Last Thursday, the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health heard from Secretary Azar for the first time. We discussed President Trump's proposed budget for the Department of Health and Human Services, and particularly the need to focus our investments to meet the needs of a rapidly-changing world.

During the hearing, Secretary Azar outlined his plans to combat the ongoing opioid crisis, treat mental illness, and advance health care reform. He said:

“A Washington-centric, one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare – especially in insurance markets most affected by Obamacare – is simply not working and must change.”

I agree with Secretary Azar that we must work to create patient-focused insurance markets and give Americans more choice in their health care. Although Obamacare's burdensome individual mandate was repealed as part of the recent tax overhaul, we still have further work to do on this issue.

Secretary Azar also discussed his objectives of bringing down drug prices and improving the Medicaid and Medicare systems. These issues are important to North Texans and Americans across our country.

Over the last few years, Congress has passed important laws to make health care more innovative and more effective. For example - just over one year into the implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act, we already are seeing this landmark law pay dividends for the American people. The Department of Health Human Services must work diligently to ensure that laws – like 21st Century Cures – are implemented to their full potential. The leader of this department must be accountable to Congress and the American people for this important work. Additionally, I discussed with the secretary the need for relieving burdens on doctors and nurses – burdens which are aggravated by complicated payment systems and electronic health records.

As chairman of the Health Subcommittee, I am looking forward to partnering with Secretary Azar on our shared goals to improve health care for American families in North Texas and across our nation. After both meeting with Secretary Azar after his confirmation and his first hearing before the subcommittee, I am confident that he has a strong vision to deliver on the

issues that matter most to all of us. I know we have a lot of work to do, and I remain committed to completing that work on your behalf. To that end, I hope to share more updates as I am able.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your concerns on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.